4:Mickey E-5 (1940-?) 1947 AE5 Miao AE5

as in their homes, they could entertain kinsmen who had come in to market. 265

Associations. As far as I could determine, the Cowrie Shell Miao had no associations. 575

Religious Institutions. The Cowrie Shell Miao had no formally organized religious communities. They did, however, have religious specialists, including priests. These were the men who performed certain ritual acts, though at other times they were just like other members of the community. Like all other members of the community they were farmers, heads or younger members of families, taking part in the usual economic activities of family and village. As priests they did not take the lead in rites of intensification such as calendric feasts and bullfights, as these were family concerns, and the head of the family presided. However, they had a definite part to play in childbirth, preservation of the good fortune of the house and village, death and burial, and the initial acts of a bullfight and the cyclical sacrifice. Rarely was a priest called in in case of illness; usually a shamaness was asked to perform her ritual in such circumstances. There were at least six priests and three shamanesses in the village. In one case a Taoist priest from Kou-ch'ang was asked to conduct his ritual in behalf of a sick woman. This consisted of chanting and shaking his pieces of iron and clappers as he moved about in a loose-jointed manner. In another instance a woman from a different village came to perform in behalf of a sick child. 793 791 771

Once in the village and once in Lung-li, I saw something which the head of our family told me was "Our P'u Sa." The Lung-li postmaster, a native of the province, said it was "a country superstition," not believed in by the Lung-li Chinese. *P'u Sa* is the Chinese word for Buddha and is often loosely used, as here, just for "deity." A man came to the village with a little red, wooden house on a bamboo pole which he set up before each house in turn, much as the priest and his assistants went from house to house "to bring good fortune." I did not find out whence he had come. The little house could stand firmly without support. The man stood beside it and chanted in Miao, beating the side of the house as he did so, and a gong suspended below the shrine 778 788